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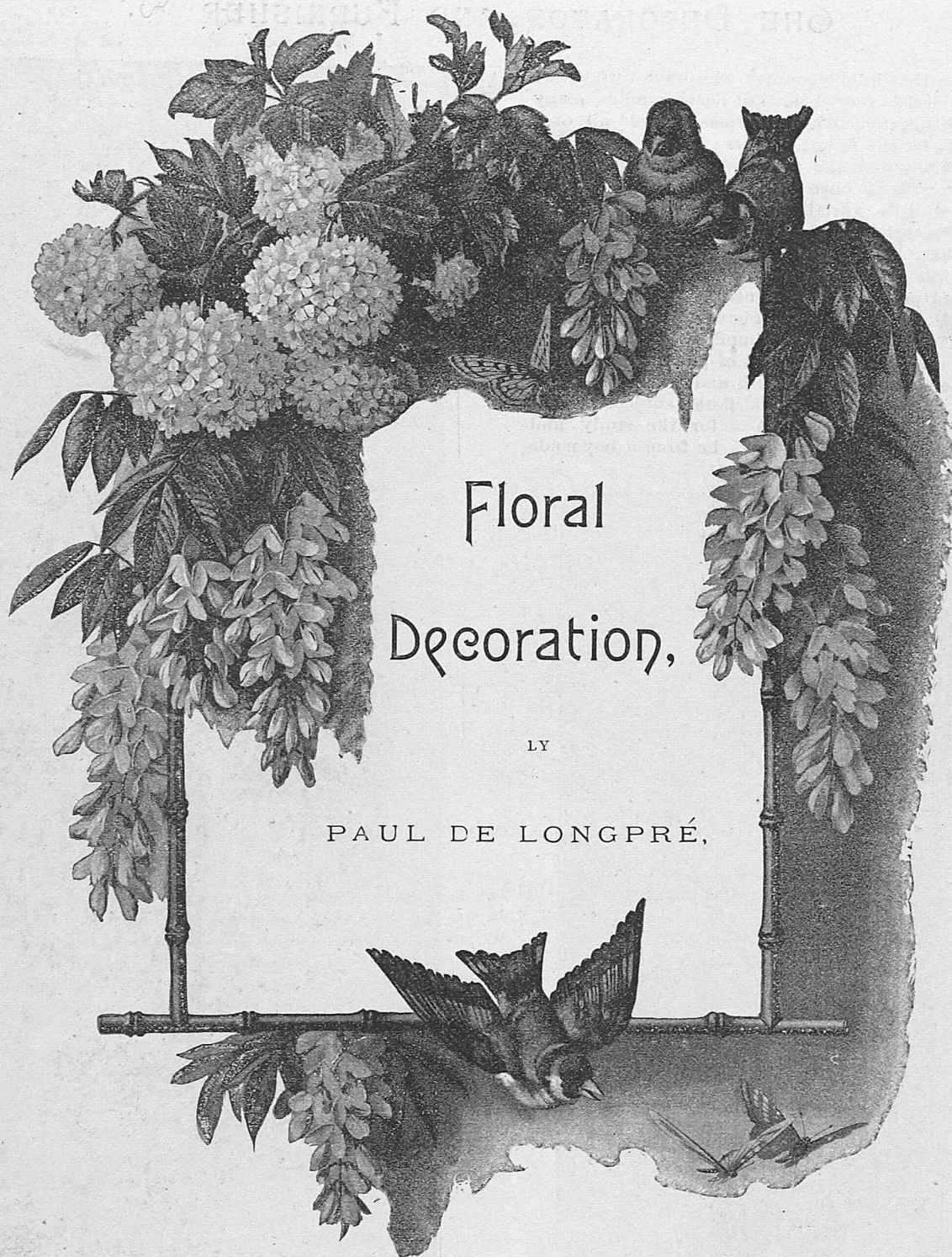
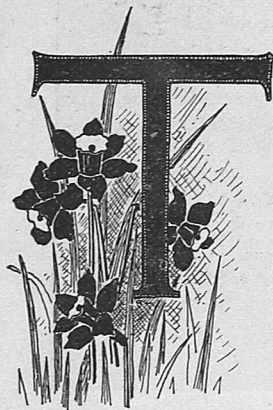


FIG. 1.—A FINISHED PANEL DESIGN—BIRDS, SNOWBALLS AND WISTERIA.



THE AMERICAN TAPESTRY CO., of 286 Fifth Avenue, New York, presided over by Mr. J. F. Douthitt, is fortunate in the new addition to its staff of artists in the person of M. Paul de Longpré, who has been recognized in his native city of Paris as the greatest of living flower painters.

Decorative artists in the United States have been so long engaged in discovering the newest trick as to *how* their work should be done, that they have ignored the far more vital question of *what* kind of work they ought to produce. Everything that has been origi-

nal, beautiful, artistic and truly decorative, has been reproduced by mechanical methods, whose sole aim is to reduce the cost of the work in trying to produce same effects, and decorative art has necessarily become flat, cold, hard and tame. The sculptor or wood carver, who laboriously chiseled their designs from the solid material, were followed by the stucco artist,

who moulded similar designs, which were glued or cemented into position on the wall or ceiling; and these in turn have been followed by the man with the tube, who takes his position on the floor of an apartment, and squirts what he calls "free hand arabesques" in each corner and along the borders of the ceiling. This is cheapening decorative work with a vengeance, and the time has come when plaster moulds, embossing presses, printing machines, the buzz saw, and tube squirting, are the proudest achievements of the decora'or's art.

What is wanted in decoration is a revolution in the direction of more natural and more artistic styles. We require a fresh and vital sentiment to animate the work of modern decorators and take the place of the flat, dull and lifeless frescoing, plastic compositions, and sawn wood tracteries that are now everywhere in vogue.

It is with pleasure, therefore, that we contemplate the work of M. de Longpré, whose productions rival nature itself in the wonderful transparency of leaf and petal in his floral compositions, which are humid with the life sap of the plant itself. His work is at once marvelously faithful to nature, and at the same time idealistic, showing nature at her best,

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

There have been artists in the country who have turned out what have been considered very beautiful floral studies, many of which have been lithographed by art firms and sold all over the country as models for the flower painter; but by comparing any of these compositions with the work done by M. de Longpré, their inferiority will at once be apparent. The spiritual vibration and the exquisite variations of tone, with the high relief of art that characterizes M. de Longpré's work, show that the floral studies that have hitherto been produced in the United States are simple sketches of what are only the corpses of flowers, every leaf and petal being stiffened in the *rigor mortis* of ineffectual art. M. de Longpré is, above all, a painter of roses, although he has painted over six hundred different varieties of flowers, and he is particularly fond of painting such roses as La France, Jacqueminot, Marechal Neil, and Gloire de Dijon. His decorative work is based entirely on floral subjects. Very early in life he possessed a natural bias for the study and sketching of flowers. Born in Lyons in 1853, he from a boy made



FIG. 2.—PANEL DESIGN—CHRYSANTHEMUMS AND MORNING GLORIES.

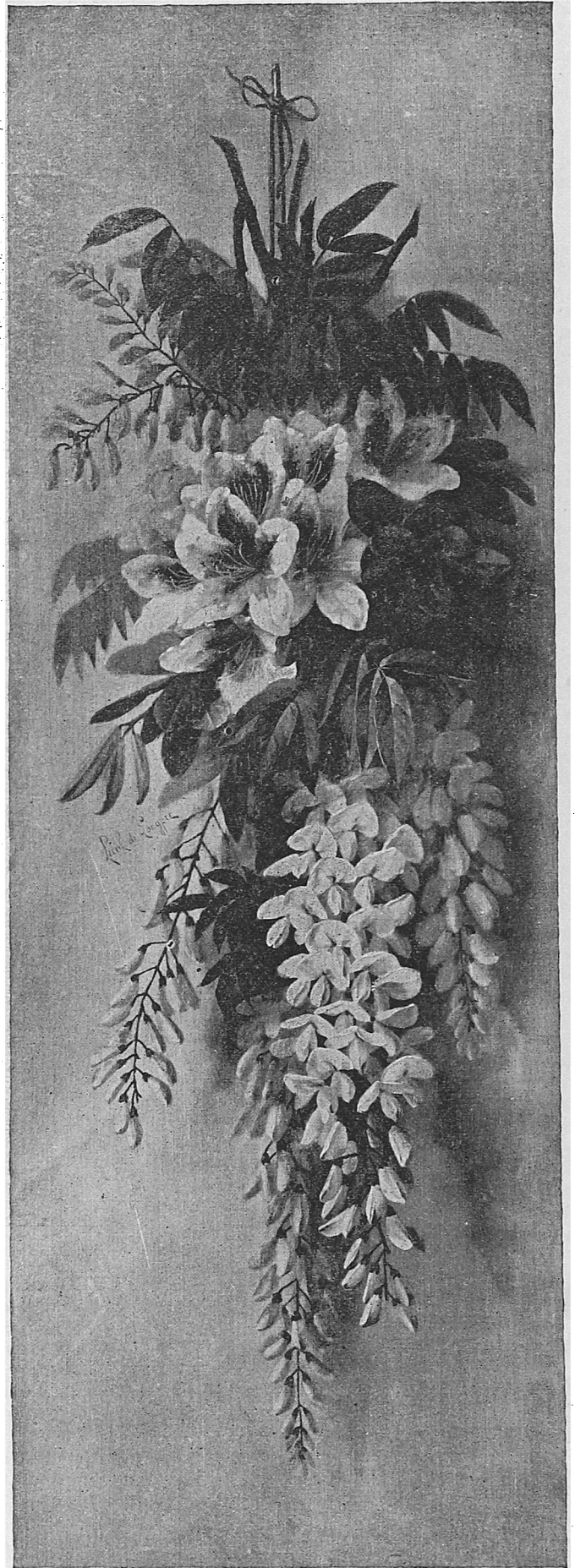


FIG. 3.—A FINISHED PANEL DESIGN—AZALEAS AND WISTERIA.

a study of flowers from nature, and never had any teacher. He was always ambitious to acquire a style of his own. He bears the name of one of the most noble families in France, but he cares only for one thing, and that is to achieve a great name in the art of painting.

He had the good fortune about thirteen years ago to meet with one of the greatest horticulturists in France, M. Paillet, a



FIG. 4.—SKETCH DESIGN FOR A LUNETTE—LILACS.

true lover of flowers, living in Chatenay, near Paris. That gentleman, who is a great admirer of M. de Longpré, gave him entire liberty to go into his conservatory and take any flowers or branches that were necessary for his studies. This was a privilege accorded to no one else, and during thirteen years M. de Longpré spent six months of each year amongst the flowers of M. Paillet, producing large quantities of floral studies of every possible variety. He has lived with flowers, he has talked with flowers, he has reasoned with flowers, and he has loved flowers. With such a temperament it is no wonder his paintings are marvels of art, marvels of execution wherein both the form and soul of the flower are portrayed to the enraptured admirer. He says that he has reason to remember his good friend Paillet with lasting gratitude, for to his patronage is indebted in a great measure his artistic skill, and certainly his knowledge of the habits and the peculiarities of the growth of flowers. Working thus, in the presence of the finest specimens of floriculture that can be produced by the joint energy of nature and art, it was certain that M. de Longpré would produce some notable sketches.

M. Paul de Longpré, who by reason of his mother having American blood, has always wished to come to America to make a name for himself as a great floral painter. He has now settled in New York, with his charming little family, and has great hopes for the future in the execution of brilliant studies, and works in high decorative style.

We give our readers a few sketches executed by M. de Longpré, specially for THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER. No attempt has been made to do fine work in Figs. 2 and 4, the idea being to exhibit in a sketchy manner the peculiar qualities of this gentleman's work:

Fig. 1 is a finished composition of birds and flowers suitable for a panel, or as a border for an inscription.

Fig. 2 is a composition for an upright panel, the subject being morning glories and chrysanthemums. It will be observed that M. de Longpré's method is unique. There is a very dramatic play of light and shade, and a fine transparency and delicacy of effect is observable.

Fig. 3 is a finished panel design, the motifs being azaleas and wisteria; the arrangement and execution are marvellously fine.

The lunette piece in Fig. 4 is a delicate piece of work. Here we have a play of light and shade that is quite as admirable as in nature itself, and the bouquet of lilacs seem bathed in

a warm, pure and caressing atmosphere. Here again the tenderness and sentiment of nature are observable, the sketch being finished with a few bold strokes that reveal an immense latent power in the artist who could do a great deal better work than this if the chance were offered him.

These designs, produced in the tones of nature, would form most charming compositions for the filling of panels of various kinds.

M. de Longpré sent some of his best work to the great Paris exhibition in 1889, and one of the Parisian newspapers thus noticed his work:

"M. Paul de Longpré, one of our best painters of flowers, exhibited some superb paintings of orchids, for which he was awarded the first medal. Those painters of flowers who know how to paint with great exactitude are very rare now, and we hoped that a gold medal would have been awarded to M. de Longpré."

After the exhibition he had an idea to collect in one great work the best of all his studies from nature, painted in two colors. He spent a year in painting the first twelve plates of "La Flore Artistique," a marvelous piece of work.

The following is the opinion of some of the greatest French artists, memorizing the Minister of Fine Arts for obtaining a large subscription to his work:

"We respectfully recommend to Monsieur the Minister of Fine Arts, the great work of Paul de Longpré, 'La Flore Artistique.' All that we could say or write on it would not be enough. All his flowers are drawn, painted and grouped with great talent and great care. What work is of greater interest than this? And with your distinguished patronage, it will be a veritable success.

Signed, { GEROME.
BOUGEREAU.
MEISSONIER.
BONNAT.

The above celebrated twelve plates, in addition to many other floral studies, are being exhibited in Mr. Douthitt's salon.

There is now an opportunity offered the American people to have their homes decorated with this fresh and natural style of ornament, and if not the whole house, at least one room should be decorated with floral traceries after nature, which, done by our artist, would confer a fame upon the house itself. M. de Longpré's work, executed in conjunction with the work of Mr. Douthitt's figure painters, would so glorify an apartment that the decoration would be a noble and lasting satisfaction to the owner.